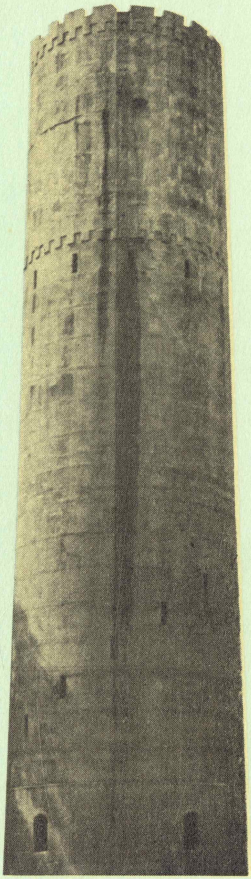


Tower

Editor: Victoria Benson

Layout Editor: Clay Nordan

Creative Consultant: Renee Bostany

Staff: Karen Furst, Benny Glascow, Margaret Herron, Joe Hudson, Barbara Reynolds

Special Thanks to Dr. Norman McMillan

1974-1975

Table of Contents

Untitled	Melanie Cook	iv
The Flight of Icarus	Barbara S. Reynolds	1
Poem	Ann Nathews	1
Reaction	Pam Campbell-Fowler	2
Timelight	Zelda Dale Walker	2
The Motion of Waters is the Change of Seasons	Russell Thomas	4
Storms	Phillip Edwards	5
Suburbia	Glenda Weathers	6
The Winner	Jim Garrett	7
New Idol	Rozanne Booth	7
Domino	Karen Furst	8
Some Questions Aroused in Me by Dr. Edelin	Mark Brandon	9
Unalienable Rights— Fact & Fantasy	M. E. Martin, Jr.	10
Photograph	Robert Stewart	13
The Shell	Russell Thomas	13
Poem 1	Elvin Price	14
Untitled	Phillip Edwards	15
Life, How Is It Made?	Dorothy C. Marshall	16
Apostasy	Ron Edwards	17
A Poem	Shelley Hill	18
Photograph	Rick Ott	20
The Day Mr. Spock and Spaceship Earth Fought Alka-Seltzer and the Venus-Fly-Trap Galaxy	Ray Bish	21

Walls	Mary Gibbons	22
Alone	Rozanne Booth	22
A Black Rose	Joe Jackson	23
Photograph	Pam O'Donnell	24
Grand Opening	Vicki Benson	25
The Lamb	Barbara S. Reynolds	26
I Sit and Watch My Friends at Sleep	Marvin Ginn	27
Photograph	Rick Ott	28
Poem	Tony Whaley	29
"Spring Love"	Patti Marxsen	30
Remembering	Sharnon Harrison	34
"Sisters"	Victoria Benson	35
For Laurie	Inge K. Hinrichs	36
Anji and the Metaphysical Tree	Robert Stewart	37
Solace	Candy Rogers	38
Greeting	Steve Hubbard	39
A Coffin Sound	Elvin Price	40
Print	Robert Stewart	42
A Dead Man's Clothes	Shelley Hill	43
Timed exposure	Pam O'Donnell	44
I'll Keep My Castles	Inge K. Hinrichs	45
Photograph	Robert Stewart	46
O Tempora O Mores O Hades	Shelley Hill	47
Early Pages	Gary Greene	48

The Flight of Icarus

Barbara S. Reynolds

Fledglings on the edge of the nest
We plunge like Icarus
From the Minos cliffs.
Warnings from our fathers
Caution us against
The brilliance of the sun;
The dampness of the sea;
But the sun
The golden, visionary sun
Draws us nearer nevertheless.

moon
cold coin of gold light
window to another world
show us the way too

sunset
glow of pinkish spray
beyond the darkening hills
whispers a good-bye

abuse
I gave all my love
and wanted you in return
you gave me your love—

happy is the one
being, loved and sharing
but not holding on

And as the sun sets
So it rises once again
Thus be it with man.

Ann Nathews

"To the white man it is known as the Battle of Wounded Knee; to the Indian as the Massacre of the Big Foot Band. It was the last battle to be fought in the United States' longest undeclared war."

Reaction

Pam Campbell-Fowler

All the Indians
Without anymore reason
and absolutely without practice or rehearsal
were on stage for their final, fare-well performance and
Although the lights flickered for a moment
everyone agreed it was a triumph to be had by the 7th Cavalry
without which the Americans wouldn't be here today
especially since we fall to a depth
and at such a depth
flicker a moment
and flash on again,
still falling

Timelight

Zelda Dale Walker

Darkness so dense
your mind does not know
if reflections are outside or in.

The mountain waters splashingly fall/down the canyon wall
with little force in the silver moonlite day.
How i wonder about
the timelight days
which pass
pass
pass
pass
pass
pass . . .

The Motion of Waters is the Change of Seasons

Russell Thomas

I.

I don't need a sudden, cold wind
To tell me that autumn has come again.
In the stream I see many-colored leaves drift past
And that alone says enough.

II.

Land and water covered with ice and snow.
Whither do the buried waters flow?
Silence . . . Only the icy waters know.

III.

A swelling of cold waters in the stream
And bobbing along, tiny bits of green.
On the mountain, spring.

IV.

A pool reflects sunny skies, clear
The laughter of a brook is wonderful to hear
Sing, little wing!
Summer draws near!

Storms

Phillip Edwards

A flash from hidden cannons
Followed by a loud report
Echoing o'er the hills
A million or more footsoldiers
run across the roof
in the black of night
But safe am I from the assailing storm
Asleep, in ever gentle repose
in dream's comforting arms

Suburbia

Glenda Weathers

Suburbia is a tiny speck on a vast globe where people in similar income brackets live in similar houses with similar lawns and similar life styles. At worst, it is repetition . . . the same horns blowing for car pool each morning, the familiar grind of the milk truck, the ritualistic delivery of mail each day. Suburbia is a mortgage with payments that never end; it is a house with leaking faucets and squeaking doors; it is a double-car garage that has never known a car. Suburbia is the ultimate of things hoped for, the evidence meant to be seen.

Suburbia is an institution for the American way of life. At best, it is the security of belonging to a family of families; it is a light in the night from the window next door; it is the swell of pride when you pull in the drive, knowing this is where you live. It is a place to prop your feet and leave your heart for suburbia is a home, with children and laughter, warmth and tears, growing and learning, living and loving.

The Winner

Jim Garrett

I once knew a man,
Who claimed to be a born loser.
But you know how some people are always
Looking at the darker side of life,
And I thought this man was one of those.
But one day I heard
That he had entered a race,
And bet his life he would lose.
But after the race was run,
He had won.

1974

New Idol

Rozanne Booth

He makes his metal houses
    along the straight steel roads.
He works his job like a robot
    punching buttons busily.
While we sat in wonder,
    he built us all a town.
Now metal man is wonderman—
    he hails from the sky
Our appreciation awes him,
    but soon someone belittles him
    and reality results.
He's just another idol.

Domino

Karen Furst

With puppet string touches
he performs
skillfuly playing with his minds images
creating the embryo.

In his first negative proof
thirteen statues stand
type-casted straight

our Fate is resting completely
in Domino's hands

Charcoal shadows are base
as the drawing takes on
looking glass faces.

His token emblem
is the visor
and the coven he has drawn
is supreme.

Some Questions Aroused in Me by Dr. Edelin

Mark Brandon

What kind of world, oh God, is this
Whose mortal hands defile divine
Conception? What type weak, frail man,
Thou in thine image made, would purge
The very life from him, which serves
To life and thus to life again,
Simply to please the transient snake—
Society—that animal
Which transforms Man to what he was
not meant?

That semi-life so much
Like life in whole appeared that I
Could scarcely seek those legal quests,
Transparent answers, that so many
Claim to know.

Why death? Why life?
And why this empty-seeming world
So full of insincerity?
Why birth? Why thought? Why empty-headed
Superficial claimants to the truth?
Is Truth? Why falseness?

Am I? or doomed
From want of order, Truth, or love,
To personified non-existence—
End product of some Divine abortion?

Unalienable Rights - Fact & Fantasy

M. E. Martin, Jr.

In the Declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson expounded what has become the credo of the American people. Thus Americans from the very beginning have had ingrained within them the idea of "unalienable Rights . . . Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." However, we are now entering an era in which that government instituted by the Founding Fathers will embark on a course which will infringe on these unalienable rights. The crisis we as Americans must confront involves our reaction to such infringements. The most heated issue of the near-future will be that which seeks to resolve the conflict between the governed and the government. In our own time "the Right of the people to alter or abolish" the government when it becomes "destructive of these ends" (Life, Liberty & Happiness) will be seriously threatened.

The bonds which unite men for the purpose of governing themselves are indeed tenuous. Primarily, it is from a man's desire to control others rather than himself that such bonds are initially made. Nevertheless, at the time when it is no longer convenient for the bulk of men to protect and maintain government, the government will use coercion to maintain itself.

The government of the United States is an entity. It has bodily existence through its employees who compose the complex bureaucracy we must all encounter—to our dismay. The government speaks and its words are law because it possesses the force to make them so. Those it governs are made to sense its imposing power by means of the edifices and monuments it has erected to itself and its purposes. Americans have given their government every appearance of life from such practices as festive celebrations of the nation itself to the celebration of its heroes who have been spiritualized, even deified, in the American consciousness. It has been personified by the character Uncle Sam, it has been symbolized in the red, white, and blue of "Old Glory," and it has been glorified and romanticized through patriotic hymns and battle songs. But in every sense our government is parasitic, for without the people it could not survive. Moreover, as many of our early gods' other creations have passed into oblivion, there is the great possibility that Uncle Sam will shortly become extinct.

In the mounting complexity of our century we are still governed by antiquated laws, institutions, political philosophies, and practices. Theodore Roosevelt entered this century brandishing the diplomatic "Big Stick." But because during the intervening years we have experienced advances in science and technology which have diminished time and distance on our planet, Theodore's "Big Stick" has become too big to use. However, power tactics are still employed even though they are now obsolete and will eventually prove detrimental to both the oppressed and the oppressor. Furthermore, problems in business, industry, science, and even government now require swift solutions; yet, governmental machinery still moves with the speed of the proverbial tortoise. Indeed Jackson's New Orleans accusation that "Washington's always too late" is more relevant than ever. Solutions come too late or not at all while a disenchanted population is being overcome by even greater problems.

The crisis deepens as Americans cease to believe in their government. The people watch indifferently, cynically, as investigating agencies are investigated, as politicians are exposed, and as a President and his subordinates are tried for their subversive activities. It is tragically disclosed that all too often those who are to uphold "law and order" are themselves criminals. Moreover, the irony is compounded as commentators wade through all the sordid details, naively telling onlookers that "the system really works." One is made to ask himself, "What kind of system allows things of this nature to happen in the first place?" The situation has clearly developed into one where size and complexity in certain agencies have led to corruption. Combining this loss of faith in government with the ineptness of our national leadership, we can say farewell to the America of the past.

St. Jean De Crevecoeur was closer to the element which forms a national unity when he cited the phrase "Ubi panis, ibi patria."[1] As the cities erupted in the '60's, the prime cause of the violence did not stem from rioters' feeling that they were being deprived so much politically as materially. The inequalities between the **haves** and the **have-nots** were too pronounced and even advertised, as the "good life" was reserved for only the chosen few. Violence was the result when the system gave promises of equality and did not fulfill its guarantees. Rather than alleviating the cause for these riots, however, federal, state, and local governments took action to suppress force by greater force.

---

[1]"Where the bread is, there is one's country."

Throughout this century social legislation has made American citizens more dependent upon government. This and the way they are educated have led persons to believe that they are "owed" something by the rest of society. The haunting question of our time will be—what happens when government does not pay off? The consequences will be catastrophic as angry and distressed people take to the streets.

Finally we approach the issues which will result in the greatest and perhaps last conflict between "the People" and their "Government." Already laws are being proposed which will take the individual's right to "Happiness" from him. With energy, food, and other resource shortages prevalent, legislation will be forthcoming which will prohibit or sharply curtail individual activities once taken for granted among his unalienable rights. Laws will limit the size of his home and car, the amount of energy he will consume, the quantity of his food supply and ultimately the number of persons in his household.

As such legislation is enforced it will become apparent that "Liberty" as once defined has been encroached upon. More and more "the People" will lose their freedoms as "the consent of the governed" gravitates toward government consent. After all, liberty is an abstraction and life's necessities are concrete—liberty without life is meaningless. It is a fact that men will gladly exchange liberty for the promise of security, else they would never consent to any government regardless of its beneficence.

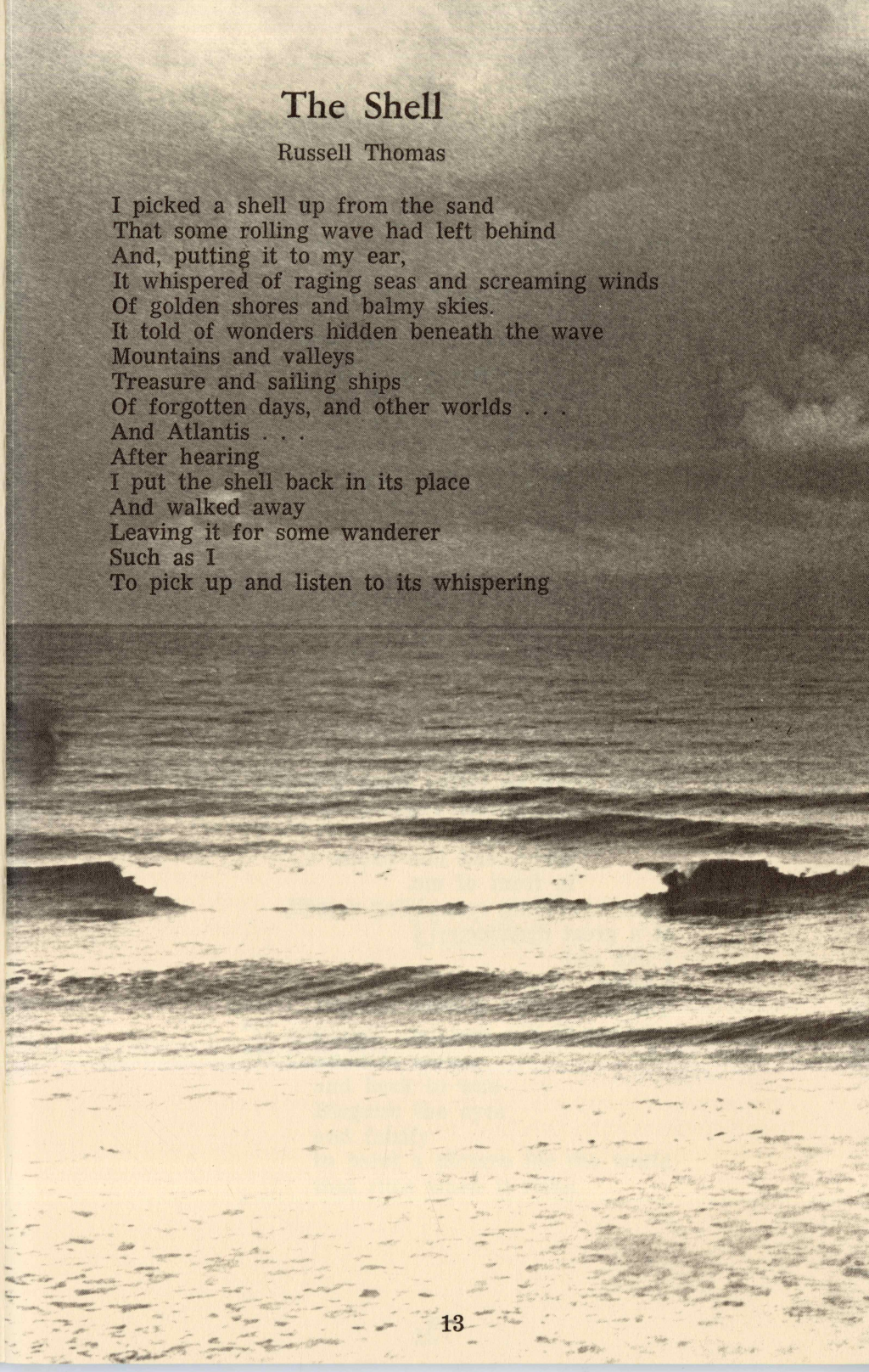
Decisions and discussions in recent years mark the final trend as regards our last unalienable right. Legislation of legal decisions involving abortion indicates a changing attitude toward the right to "Life." Our society has decided that the fetus in the mother's body does not possess the explicit right to life. Also, the intensity of debate regarding the issue euthanasia indicates serious consideration of the individual's right to die on request. As medical facilities and cost become increasingly exorbitant, this alternative will be used with or without a legal nod. Thus we confront the right to life from both extremes—birth and death. From this point it will not be difficult for federal agencies to make determinations concerning the period between. Considering that our country might eventually suffer famine and severe fuel shortages, some authority will, by its policies on food and fuel allocation, determine who lives and who dies.

It is improbable that millions will react passively when this last unalienable right is threatened in their own case. Already a struggle has begun.

The Shell

Russell Thomas

I picked a shell up from the sand
That some rolling wave had left behind
And, putting it to my ear,
It whispered of raging seas and screaming winds
Of golden shores and balmy skies.
It told of wonders hidden beneath the wave
Mountains and valleys
Treasure and sailing ships
Of forgotten days, and other worlds . . .
And Atlantis . . .
After hearing
I put the shell back in its place
And walked away
Leaving it for some wanderer
Such as I
To pick up and listen to its whispering



Poem I

(from **A Waning in the Night**)

Elvin Price

I am a point in space
I am defined,
for I am functional.
But this point (that I am),
in cold space,
feels.
From a great distance, (between you and I),
you ask me,
"Who are you?"
"Who are you?" echoes around
the dark.
I ask, "Who am I?"
"Who am I?" echoes inside my
head.
I sack groceries thirty hours a week.
I go to class fifteen hours a week.
I sit in hot sweat,
sleepy and idle hands
in front of me.
I see something resembling myself,
at a great distance,
I like and
I smile.
You ask, "What is your name?"
echoes roll like thunder, "Who am I?"
"Who am I?"

I stand forcefully
I look into your eyes and I say (inside myself),
"I am Odesseus"
"I AM Odesseus!"
Sad wandered and brave
man
fighting day by day
struggling to get to the
place I am going
wise man that I am
working with my hands,
working with my hands
working with my hands
with my hands—
i am a sack boy—just a sack boy
In the darkness the sing-song echo
answers, "You are the con-man."
"You are the con-man."
for you ask,
"What is your name?"
and I say,
"Nobody."

Untitled

Phillip Edwards

People are such flaccid folk
Bend to whims
and back to woe
Disguise the eyes
and falsify
to paint a picture for the world
that runs when it rains.

Life, How is it Made?

Dorothy C. Marshall

How is one's Life made?
Like making a good spice cake,
Like starting a fire in the fireplace,
Like a carpenter building a house,
The best of life is made from scratch.

How is one's Life made?
Like making a good spice cake,
Flour's the recipe's foundation,
Nutmeg adds an interesting twist,
Eggs a smooth transition make.

How is one's Life made?
Like starting a fire in the fireplace,
First a lighted match and paper,
Next kindling and wood slowly but surely,
Now cover with coals and see what shows through.

How is one's Life made?
Like a carpenter building a house,
He needs a plan or blueprint,
I hope he has nails and boards,
A bit of paint to cover it.

How is one's Life made?
The best of life is made from scratch,
We are not born full grown,
Nor with the reputation of the famed,
But with nothing, so we can make our own.

Apostasy

Ron Edwards

I,
a man with no soul,
did believe.

But knowledge raped faith's innocence with
swarming facts moving unsteadily in
a heart
then whole.

Knowledge boiled my brain in the wine called
communion, causing faith to be vomited
through spirit and soul.

A dark heart,
yearning for peace . . .
Glory be to the Budweiser the father, and to the
pretzels, and to the Early Times.

Gnawing at a heart no longer filled, there was
guilt.
But not long until conscience went with faith.

For me to live is chaos, and to die, hell.

Praise Billy Graham from whom all bull shit
flows and flows and flows.

A Poem

Shelley Hill

I

I would never write a poem
It would mean laying my soul on the line
For strangers
and friends
To pick apart
Unmercifully.

II

If I wrote a po-em it would have to rhyme
Which, in modern poetry, is called a crime.
It would sound rather sing-song as you may know
But rhyme does have some redeeming qualities.

III

My po-em would also be metrical
But meter is "out" too.
Any kind of set pattern inhibits,
so, to hell with meter.

A poem should simply be spread,
As much as possible,
All over the page
With very
Meaning-
Full
pauses here and there.

IV

I would also have a problem
Because my poem would be too clear—
My point too evident.

Not veritably can it be said falsely that
the theme should be straightforward
Yet neither is it true that
it should not be unclear.
The reader's job is to find the "concupiscent curds" therein.

V

So, I will follow the advice
Of the contemporary,
literary sages
Who say,
If you want to write a rhyming, metrical, understandable poem
Keep it to yourself.

The Day Mr. Spock and Spaceship Earth Fought Alka-Seltzer and the Venus-Fly-Trap Galaxy

....(or Botany on the Bounty)

when nixons gone
in future years
when science officers
have pointed ears
when gardens grow
on recycled tears
the universe will shriek with laughter
when clingon wars
have all been won
when claples. whores
have spoiled the son
when neurotic bores
still rhyme the pun
We'll all die happily ever after. . .

Ray Bish

Walls

Mary Gibbons

Because I did not know
how to build bridges
I built walls
Then tore down my walls
and built bridges instead.

Years later
I burned them all in a single day.
Up came the walls again,
more subtle this time but thicker.

And as I sit here
looking out at you
I wonder
if you've even noticed.

Alone

Rozanne Booth

The warm wine rushes her spine,
The sensations cease to comfort her.
She has chosen to stand forever,
seeing nothing absolute.

A Black Rose

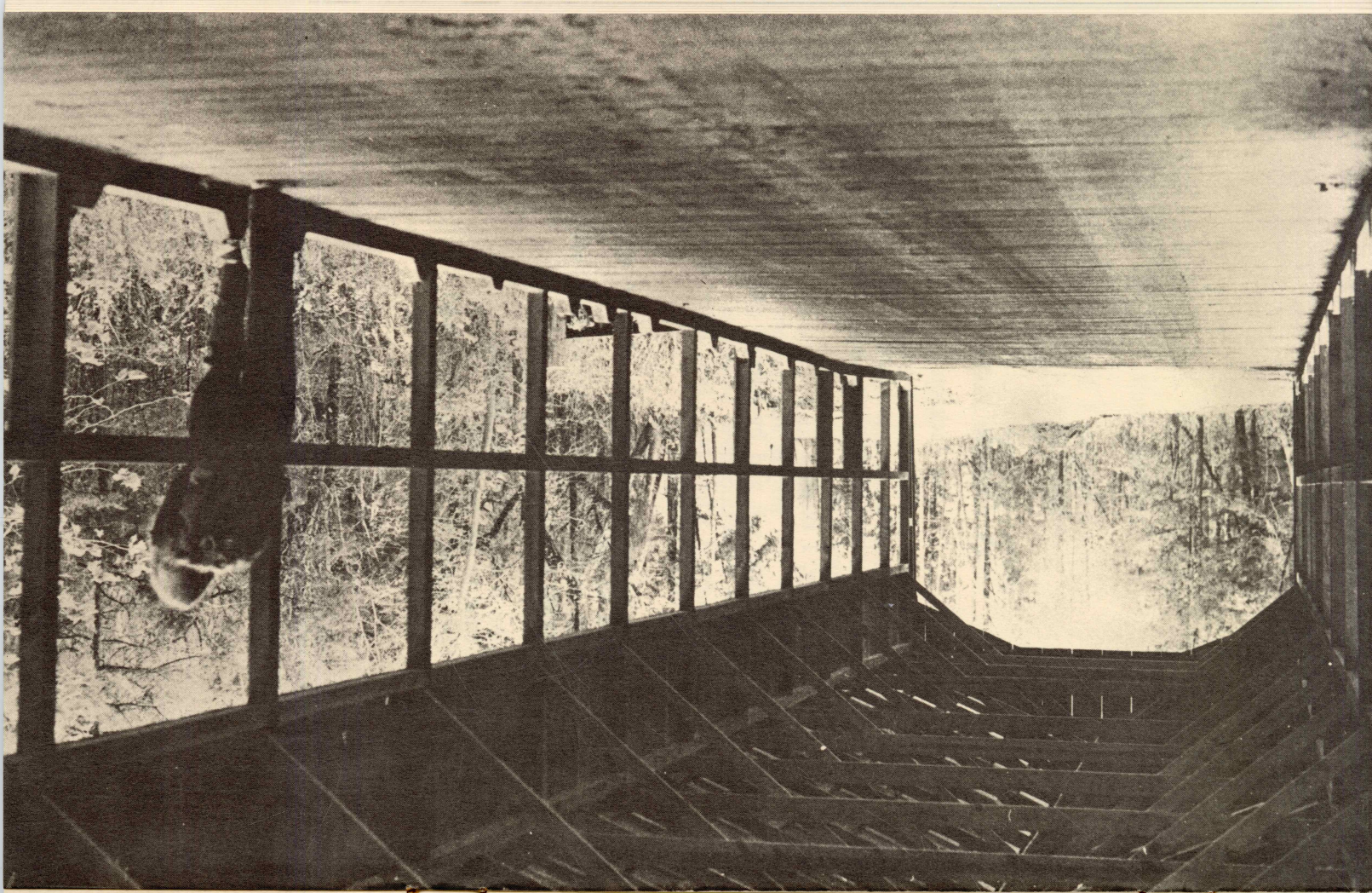
Joe Jackson

Have you ever seen a black rose,
with its stem all broken and frayed?
She is one now,
unjustly, I think.

She stood tall and by herself most
of the time.
A husband who drank her, loved her,
but not enough.

She stood like the Statue of Liberty,
in a harbor of mud,
And watched day by day, as the base
eroded slowly.

Like a majestic ship at sea,
about to be captured,
She chose to sink that ship, and
go down with it.



Grand Opening

Vicki Benson

A shop with relics of the past
And wisps of fantasies and dreams—
That is all own. It is a plain, simple shop—
Nothing gaudy or fine to be locked away last
Thing before I leave each day or
Advertised in bright neon beams.
Still, it is important to me.

But on such a
Street there's no place for an insignificant store
Such as mine. My little nook has nothing which can
Be compared with the shops nearby. No one need stop
And look.

How long can I stay where
I'm happy, till things other than
Those I know must be sold here?

But then there will be
A small room in the back for these things, should that day
Ever come—a room set aside
To be opened . . . occasion'ly.

The Lamb

Barbara S. Reynolds

He is the fledgling
That fell from the nest
This silent little boy
Before the flickering television set
Who tips his bicycle backward
And pretends he's the "Motorcycle Man"
Or slashes the air with imaginary blows
In imitation of David Carradine
Born of parents who worshipped
Venus and Bacchus
He is the orphan of compromise
Showered with kisses and consolation
Shuttled from mother to father to grandparents
Watching Sesame Street
And The Six Million Dollar Man
As innocent and ignorant
As ancient Iphigenia
Before Agamemnon sailed for Troy

I Sit and Watch My Friends at Sleep

Marvin Ginn

I wonder as I think within dark rooms, alone,

While bodies slip to sink, from trips and lots of stones.

I speed pass thoughts too quick to catch their tune.

Sometimes a space will play its trick.

It will not let me find a place to rest or mind to grasp.

My eyes are tied, by strands of light and time, to fleeting moments mired inside my head.

Just as the candles shape their lives, or burn it till it's gone, some time will take its knife and carve me till he's tired or else until I'm through.

Now see how space went through my eyes
and tied them to its sight.

Here is the time I must go. So I will say goodnight.

I have no desire to seek sleep's refuge tonight—
I'll sit and watch the sun rise in the morning,
I'll talk, with my pen as my tongue,
And my paper as my non-respondent listener.

I ask you but one thing (my paper companion),
That you not behold the lies which are self-evident,
But rather, the truths between the lines
Of the pages of my life.

Tony Whaley

(Facing Page: **Tower** Award for Best Art—Rick Ott)

"Spring Love"

Tower Award for Best Prose Piece

Patti Marxsen

Pale yellow walls. Dingy, yellow-gray walls peeling away in dry, crackling petal shapes, peeling away, rotting and falling to the green linoleum floor in a thousand pale yellow, mosaic fragments. There is a girl lying on her back on a table and a black doctor, sweating in the naked light of a swaying light-bulb. A square, Negro palm waits suspended in air and two one hundred dollar bills appear, connected to a frail, ivory-colored hand. Two one hundred dollar bills. There is an open window. Pale, gauze-like curtains billow in and out, swell in the quiet, blue evening air, hang motionless for a moment then float into the room and billow up again in silent, springtime ballet. An open window. Negro children are playing below. It sounds like hopscotch. Roller skates scrape along the sidewalk for a while then vanish with the soft, melody voices of Negro women walking back from the bus stop. Quiet, blue evening. A white girl on a white table covered with a sheet and a Negro doctor asking no questions.

* * *

"I don't believe in abortion," she said softly, watching his back as he stood up and walked toward a cluttered desk in the corner of the room. He fumbled through some papers, then turned, holding an envelope between two fingers like it was a cigarette. The muscles around his mouth twitched uncontrollably and his foot thumped against the worn carpet with a dull, rhythmic sound. "Here's a hundred and fifty bucks. It's all I have." He took a few steps forward and held the envelope out to her with a large, trembling hand. "I figured it would come to this sooner or later, the way you're so half-assed about taking the pill."

She sat up straight, her mouth dropping open a little. "I don't believe in abortion, Tom, I don't want one and I . . ."

"I don't care what you believe in. I'm not getting married and I'm not claiming that kid!" He was leaning forward, almost hissing at her. She watched him angrily as he let the envelope fall to the bed. "Hell," he said, straightening up, "for all I know it's not mine anyway." She lowered her head and shook it gently so the soft, dark curls bobbed around her shoulders. He turned away to the window and stood with his hands in his pockets looking out at the gray, overcast day. It seemed as if time had stopped and the small, underfurnished room took on an atmosphere of limbo as it filled with a lazy, weightless silence.

"If we could face this thing together maybe it wouldn't be so . . . so scary," she said, leaning back against a dingy, gray pillow. He spun around, startled, and stared at her for a moment with blank eyes that could not commit themselves to an expression. Gray eyes. Pale, expressionless eyes that stared into her gaze until they began to flicker and the foot began its monotonous thumping and he turned again to the dreary afternoon sky.

She left the apartment, left the envelope with the money in it lying on the rumpled bed and the pale, expressionless eyes staring through the ceiling. The sky was low and shadowy like the underside of tin foil and everything looked a little gray. She looked back over her shoulder at the apartment building and even the red bricks looked a little gray under the overcast sky. "It's not his decision," she thought. She concentrated on her lower abdomen for a few minutes, trying to feel something inside, something growing, pain, anything. There was nothing. "How can I expect him to care about something I can't even feel? A little mass of blood. How can a man be expected to care?" She drove home to her dark apartment, showered, watched a little television, ate a sandwich and went to sleep.

* * *

They call it packing. Gauze and more gauze to catch the sea of blood that would have to break, break forth and flow before it could be over and forgotten. Her glassy brown eyes jerked around the room darting from peeling pain to billowing curtains to a table of shiny surgical instruments, glancing at everything except the doctor whose dark, wide arms stopped at the edge of the white sheet, bent down, packing gauze like some kind of wood creature hiding things from other wood creatures, careful, intent, hurried. Finally, he turned away, rinsed his hands and, without looking at her said, "Just go home and stay there for a day or so. It'll happen sometime in the next twenty-four hours. Might getcha some iron pills at the drug store."

"Thank-you," she mumbled.

"Say what?" He turned, drying his hands on a paper towel.

"I said thank-you."

* * *

They had flown kites last spring in the park. Just when the daffodils were beginning to fringe the roadsides and the cool, soft gray air was building up to its full force they had run out like little children and flown kites all day and picnicked on the dry grass. "I love you," she said. "I know." They had laughed and watched each other's eyes and felt clean and close together. "I know we won't always feel this way," she said. "I know." She needed to articulate each thought, hold it in her hand, pick it apart and try to understand what it meant. He was the quiet type, but that is not to say that he didn't understand or feel or think about the things that she thought about. "Sometimes I wish we could be together all the time," she said. She kept her own apartment because her mother drove into the city every now and then to visit her and she, her mother, didn't

care much for Tom anyway. Whenever she talked about him she would finish with something like, "I wish you could find a nice, young man, someone who would take you to a nice show or a restaurant. Someone with . . . sophistication." No, she didn't care much for Tom and it would be pointless to force the issue to a confrontation.

Tom lay back against a sweep of dry, yellow grass, studying cloud formations. He yanked a thick blade of grass up out of the dirt and held it between his teeth, letting it rock up and down while he gazed at the slow-moving puffs of clouds. "You know," he said, "when I was a kid, I would lie down like this on the ground and look at the clouds, just like this, and no matter how hard I tried to make them look different they always looked like monsters to me."

"Monsters?!"

"Yeah. Every damn time. Why? What do they look like to you?"

"Oh, I don't know . . . lambs, bunny rabbits, something like that, I suppose."

"Bunny rabbits?!"

She slumped back and laid next to him, her head resting on his arm. The grass had collected itself into huge, straw-colored tufts and encircled them like a bird's nest. "Tom?" she whispered, nuzzling against his chest.

"Yeah?"

"I love you so much. I'll always love you. I know I will."

* * *

When it happened she was making a pot of coffee, measuring the coffee into the pot, measuring the sugar into the cup. She grabbed herself suddenly and staggered to the bathroom. There were what seemed like a thousand heavy, dead, aching sensations that swelled and rippled through her, one after another, like icy water flowing out of a cold metal faucet; cold, metal surges of pain that swelled up inside her like black balloons until at last, finally and at last, thank God, they burst and died away in shapeless, sloshing sounds and then stopped all together until she felt as though there was nothing left inside, nothing left at all but a damp, metallic chill and the one, singular thought, "I'll call him later." She slept for a long time, waking only long enough to cry herself back to sleep. "I'll call him later."

* * *

The next day was warm and bright, too bright. The phone rang early, jarring her out of a dreamless sleep. "Oh, hi. I was going to call you today." She pushed her hair back away from her face as she listened to his soft, concerned voice, distant and thick with early morning hoarseness. "Yeah, I'm okay. It's all over." She listened again. "Yeah, really, I'm fine. A little weak, maybe." She laid her head back against the headboard, still listening. "I know. I know. Let's not talk about it. Yeah, sure, come anytime. I'll be here."

He came and made the coffee and sat with her and talked about a trip to the lake they would make next weekend with friends. "Could you make some potato salad? You make great potato salad." He stayed and made lunch and washed the dishes from lunch and the coffee pot. Then he left.

She drifted around the apartment for a while, walking slowly through the shadows, touching the books he had given her for birthdays, Valentine's Day, for no reason at all. There were books of poetry, a huge, expensive volume about Michelangelo, and a set of novels by Tolstoy. She let her fingers skid along the titles for a moment like an idle child letting a stick skid along a fence. Then she picked one up from the shelf and read the inscription aloud,

"Happy First Anniversary, Darling, I love you,"
Tom."

There was no date. "It must have been the anniversary of our first date or our first kiss or something." Tom was the sentimental type. She put the book down and let her eyes float across the room to a photograph of the two of them taken last summer out at the lake. "We look so happy," she thought. "We are happy! It isn't his fault that he can't understand. All he had to do was wait it out. How could he possibly understand my pain, my feelings? He cares about me, I know he really does, he really does care, I know he does." She looked at herself in the mirror. "Got to do something about the way I look." She showered, watched a little television, ate a sandwich, and went to sleep.

Late that night the phone rang. "Hello? Oh, hi. No, I'm fine. I was asleep." She smiled, listening to his voice. "I know. No, it wasn't your fault. It wasn't anybody's fault. It's okay. I know. I understand, I really do. You don't have to say anymore. Please." Then softly, "I love you. I'll always love you. Good night."

* * *

It was spring again a few years later. They were sitting in a restaurant downtown having coffee when a child waved at them from across the room, a little boy with round, brown eyes and clear, ivory-colored skin. It was nothing more than that, a child neither of them had ever seen before, waving at them across a crowded room full of people neither of them had ever seen before, people clanking teaspoons against heavy, porcelain cups, people coughing and laughing and chattering about their work, their families, the vacations they had taken or would take this coming summer. She began to sigh heavily and he could tell from the way her mouth was quivering around the corners that she was about to cry. "Are you all right? What is it? What the hell's the matter with you?" He leaned forward, still holding his cup of coffee.

"It's just . . . it's just that sometimes I wonder . . . wonder what he would have looked like . . . what he would have . . ." Her voice stopped and she brought a napkin to her mouth to muffle the weeping sounds.

"Hey, come on now, honey. Get yourself together." He was whispering, trying to conceal his anger. "Come on now. I thought we had that all cleared up, forgotten. Why the hell d'you pick a time like this to get upset about something like that ?!" He sat back in his chair, incredulous, watching her dark, lowered head, waiting for her face to come out of the napkin.

After a long moment she looked and pushed her dark hair back and away from her eyes, tucking it behind her ears. She was slouched forward, arms folded and resting on the table, breathing evenly now, her eyes looking through him back into the past four years, five years, back to when she was a child and then a girl and then a woman, expecting something, always expecting something. Her lids fell shut for a moment then she lifted them again, focusing on his face with a soft, forgiving expression. "I know you're right. It is forgotten, believe me. I don't know what came over me. I really don't understand it. Let's forget about it, okay? Let's not talk about it." He smiled and reached across the table for her hand. Her smooth fingers crept out across the white tablecloth to meet his touch.

Remembering

Sharnon Harrison

Sunshine but soft rain,
relief from pain
a quick decision but a fatal mistake.
Tears that solve nothing
Dreams swept suddenly away
Heartaches that are and will continue to be
Ending one life only to continue another.
Wrong but right for me,
bad but justifiable,
Done and never to be undone.

"Sisters"

Victoria Benson

How long have I hated you, loving enemy,
For what you cannot help: that which you are?
How many times have you cried in bewilderment
When, poisoned by my malignant envy,
I sought with bitter words or—worse—silence, to mar
Your triumphs? You cannot know the fear which grips me
As I see overshadowed my small deeds
By the one who used to mouth my words as her own,
Gathering my opinions as bright beads
On a string. Nor can you see my identity
Gasping under the weight of our similitude;
Struggling to find if I am myself or
The sample which was used to test the recipe.
But yet only you have understood, viewed
Me with that piece of myself which causes the war
In my soul. Only you have understood.

(Dedicated to Karen, with love)

For Laurie

Inge K. Hinrichs

Lady of dreams,
lost in your world of crystal images,
searching still
for that beauty of long ago.
Gentle Lady,
drink deep of your power,
finding peace,
in the gentle lull of written words.
Lonely Lady,
touching precious ways of life,
You'll come upon
your dreams in the mysteries of your heart.
I love you Graceful Lady.
I love you for your dreams;
I love you for yourself.

Quiet Lady, may I join
the celebration of your soul,
may I share the rare
treasures of your mind . . .
Quiet Lady, may I be thought of as your friend?

Greeting

Steve Hubbard

One black farmer pushing seventy. Behind him, many years of chopping a white man's cotton, thinning a white man's corn, and feeding a white man's cattle. Behind him, years of chopping his own cotton, thinning his own corn, and feeding his own cattle. And behind him his struggle to provide for his family, to send his sons to college, and to assert his own and his brothers' humanity. Within him, a sense of accomplishment.

Before him now is my uncle's farmhouse. Down the dirt road, he begins walking the few yards to this house. Each of his firm, advancing steps manifest self-respect. I open the front door, cross the porch, and walk onto the dirt road. For the first time in five years, we see each other. His steps quicken.

The pronounced furrows in his forehead deepen as he probes my eyes with his. Snobbishness, indifference, or warmth? I've been to college; do my eyes tell the story?

Now discerning with his eyes, he moves purposefully in approaching me. He reaches me and, standing higher than I on the sloping dirt road, he hopefully offers his black hand and I my white one. Smiling gently, this black man—this man—this friend greets me.

Instead of " 'Mistuh' Steve," he now says "Steve."

A Coffin Sound

Tower Award for Best Poem

(from **A Waning in the Night**)

Elvin Price

On Wednesday my aunt died,
On Saturday we buried her on
the cedar covered hill,
Where Indian graves and so many
poor have rested for so many years—
Crude stones for markers,
No Names,
No dates.
I was a pall bearer
and I was dressed as all pall bearers
dress:
In black,
my hair combed
my shoes shined,
shoulders straight
with solemn eyes.
Slowly we rode to the church.
Slowly we marched the coffin to the
top of the hill—
crying ladies,
weeping softly,
trailing behind.
Friends and family united once again,
So strong the force of love and sorrow, on a cold Saturday in January.
So this is death.
My hands tremble—
So this is the way it is,
With shadows of naked trees
in the winter sun—
stark against the sky, limbs all lifted
toward heaven,
My eyes move from the
mesh of blue and limb,
down the tree trunk to
the ground—

from the ground to the pile of dirt,
where the roots of
trees rise from the
ground, and from the
roots to the
trunk and from
the limbs
to the sky.
From the living to the dead—
From the dead to the living—
This is the way
it is—
Life and death.
Brown's Funeral Company apologized
(when the benediction was done.)
The mountain was frozen over and
it being a long journey—
They could find no grave diggers
to cover the grave—
Would the pall bearers remain?
Someone had to do it,
Cover the grave, that is—
me and my brothers
and four cousins,
with shovels in hand,
tossed icy clods—
thump-thump.
A quick job we made of
it—
for each shovel marked
time—
and I wanted not to be so close
to death—
Not then,
Not now.
We rode over the frozen mountain—
We rode slowly through the ice and snow.
We rode in the bitter sun,
in the bitter cold.
So that is how I remember
it—
Death, I mean, that
is how I remember death
on Saturday—
and never death
on Wednesday.

A Dead Man's Clothes

Shelley Hill

What do you do with a dead man's clothes?
Do you pack them in a trunk,
Put them in the closet,
Or simply cast them aside?

I used to know a man, he was a friend of my father's,
and one day
he died.
I started to ask his wife what she did
with his clothes,
But my mother told me not to.
There was a poor old man down the road
Who could have worn some of those clothes.

When my grandfather died
My grandmother boxed up his
pants and shirts and ties
In brown cardboard boxes
Tied with rough cord
And gave them to the Salvation Army.
I don't know who wound up with those
pants and shirts and ties
But when I pass a stranger on the street I wonder
Is he wearing the clothes of a dead man?

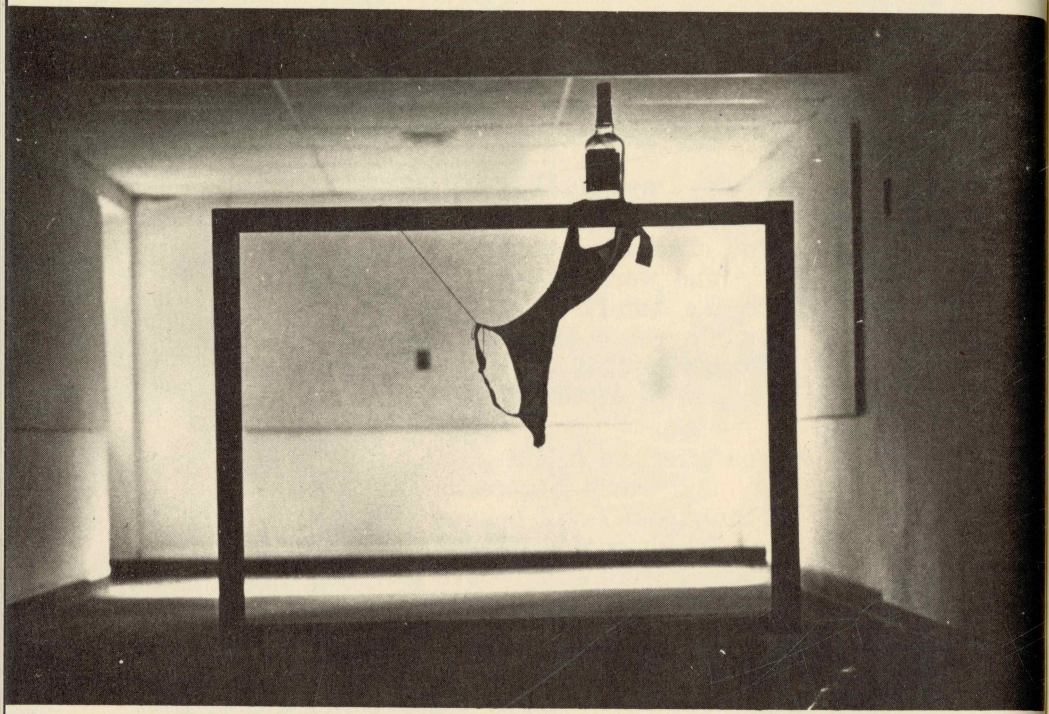
I'll Keep My Castles

Inge K. Hinrichs

You offer me a tarnished love
and worn-out words.
Thanks, but I'll keep my castles,
my gentle knights and ladies.
Thanks, but I'll keep my unicorns free,
out of captivity.

You offer me half a love
and weary gestures.
Thanks, but I still believe in dreams;
I'll chase my butterflies.
Thanks, but I still believe that rainbows
are lovely till the end.

I'll wait for my dreams to come true,
maybe I'll wait forever,
maybe I'll wait for nothing.
But I've seen the world you offer me
and I prefer my dreams,
my rainbows,
my butterflies,
Thanks . . . but, I'll keep my castles.



O Tempora O Mores O Hades

Shelley Hill

"He worked part time in Santa's toy factory.
The rest of the time he sold **Playboy** subscriptions
to hermaphrodites." (Head note to Chapter One
of the novel I didn't write last year which is
soon to be unrereleased in paperback form.)

Oh surburbia what have you done?
  Where have all the deflowered virgins gone?
Gone to Xaviera every one.
  Let's hope they never learn.

When it all falls down I'll flip you for
  the inside track.
    Heads up, I win
    Tails up, you win
That's the way the soixante neufs.

Early Pages

Gary Greene

When your hair no longer
Alters its tufts in the wind,
And you sit again before
A few fading embers,
Take my book from the shelf,
Read the early pages,
Have your few smiles
While no one sees,
Sink cautiously into your chair
Taking care to remove your glasses
And spread a sweater over your knees.
Lean back,
Rest your head on the impressed cushion,
Close your eyes
And do not see the final ash of the fire.